

## MISCELLANEOUS NOTES.

### I.—WANTED BEARS!!!

It has been suggested to me that an article on Indian Bears—on the lines of the articles on the Tigers, Panthers and Lions already published in this *Journal*, might prove interesting to Indian Sportsmen and Naturalists. Since I should like to make the account as complete as possible, I venture to appeal to the kindness of the members of the Society for help in various particulars.

In the first place, the British Museum has hardly any specimens of the Himalayan Red Bear; and skins and skulls of both sexes from various localities are very much needed to show its variations with age, sex, season, altitude and locality. It is not even known whether this bear is merely a local race of the European Brown Bear or a distinct species.

Of the Himalayan Black Bear and the common Sloth Bear of Peninsular India, specimens would also be acceptable. There is probably much to be learnt about the local variation in these two widely ranging species. It was not until recently, indeed, that the examination of a skull of the Sloth Bear—presented by H.H. The Maharajah of Gauripur—convinced me of the existence of this species in Assam.

From the Shan States a race of the Brown Bear has also been recorded; but of this practically nothing is known except a single skull.

Even of the little Malayan Bear, examples are badly needed, especially from Tenasserim, Burma and farther to the north in the eastern Himalayas and Assam; and confirmation of its reported occurrence at Darjiling would be interesting.

I should be most grateful for the donation or loan to the British Museum of any specimens of Indian Bears or for any information, regarding their overlap in range, with which sportsmen could supply me.

BRITISH MUSEUM (NAT. HIST.),  
LONDON, S. W. 7.

R. I. POCOCK.

### II.—ON THE FOOD OF THE VAMPIRE BAT (*LYRODERMA LYRA*).

One night last month, while staying at the Residency, Rajkot, I was on my way upstairs to dress for dinner, when my attention was attracted by something unusual in the appearance of one of a pair of bats hanging from the ceiling above the staircase. Looking closer, I found that, suspended from the mouth of the bat which held it by the head, was a fair-sized lizard!

I watched to see how the bat would tackle a meal of this kind. The method was soon apparent. Never letting go his hold of his prey he scrunched and scrunched away until the head was reduced to a condition which made it possible for him either to begin to swallow his prey as a pulpy whole or to detach and swallow a portion. Whichever it was, the progress of that lizard into the bat's interior continued very slowly, but steadily.

Here I had to go and dress as speedily as might be. Returning after twenty minutes, I found that the meal had advanced as far as the forelegs; the forefeet of the lizard were only just visible, the rest of the body and hind legs still hanging down. I could not unfortunately see the performance through as I was dining out and had to go. But I invited the attention of others of the house party who afterwards informed me that, at the end of dinner three-quarters of an hour later, the tip of the lizard's tail alone was still visible.

On my return about midnight, the bats were still there, engaged in bowing to each other rather after the manner of an inverted Punch and Judy. On the staircase below, I found one foot and half the head, sole remains of the victim, but sufficient to enable me to identify it as a common house gecko, quite a large specimen. Apparently the whole of the gecko, with the exception of these two fragments, had been consumed.

I may mention that while the meal was going on—a gruesome performance—the second bat made several attempts to obtain a share but was not allowed a look-in. All it succeeded in doing was to force its mate to fly with its prey to a different position on the ceiling.

The bat was of medium size, white below and with large ears. I suppose *Lyroderma lyra*, which is known to capture small birds, but I have never heard of its preying on a lizard. Aitken, however, in *Tribes on my Frontier* seems to imply that it will catch and devour mice and frogs.

BHAVNAGAR,

September, 1930.

A. H. E. MOSSE,

Lieut.-Colonel, I.A.

[The Indian Vampire Bat (*Lyroderma lyra*)—we have a second species, the Malay Vampire Bat (*Megaderma spasma*)—appears to have a comprehensive diet which includes insects, smaller bats and frogs; even the remains of a fish have been found among the litter of bones left by a colony living among the rafters of a bungalow. The dentition of these bats is indicative of a carnivorous rather than an insectivorous diet. Though named Vampire bats, they have no connection with the true Vampire or blood-sucking bats of which there are two genera confined to South America. One of these, *Desmodus rufa*, is armed with large canine and sharp canine-like incisor teeth designed for attack. The bore of the bat's gullet is so small that nothing but liquid food will pass down it while its stomach, in form, is scarcely distinguishable from the intestine.]

Eds.]